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THE APPETITUS NATURALIS IN THE PHILOSOPHY
OF
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

BY
DORIS BARNETT

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THE APPETITUS NATURALIS

IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The pre-Socratic thinkers tried to explain reality by what they saw around them, and their attempts were admirable however naive. Heraclitus with his constant flux and Parmenides with his immutable one indicate the extremes to which their speculations went. They were physicists and, as such, they wanted a theory of reality which would explain everything materially. Anaxagoras, whom the Stagirite describes as the only sober man among the early philosophers, was the first to postulate mind in the world. It was Aristotle himself who, with his doctrine of potency and act, pointed out that there could be both one and many in nature. He exposed the limitations of his predecessors and synthesised the truths contributed by all of them.

Curiously enough, we are facing today in our enlightened age a situation not altogether unlike the epoch before Socrates. Modern science has taken over the philosophical field and the new physics claims to have explained the universe. Having discredited both metaphysics and teleology, conscious and intelligent design is disdained as hopelessly obsolete¹. In fact, any explanation of reality which is not evolutionary

¹"Teleology," article by Wm. Fulton, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 12, p. 224, N. Y.; 1922. cit. Marling, The Order of Nature in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 155.

is disregarded and stands very little chance of receiving recognition. Notwithstanding the facts that for many centuries the world acknowledged Aristotle's four causes as a scientific exposition of nature, contemporary thinkers have preferred the less perfect theories of the early Greek philosophers.

The philosophy of events as propounded by Bertrand Russell, Eddington, Sir James Jeans, and the rest, is nothing more than the flux of Heraclitus. The mechanistic theories plainly revert to Democritus, although we ordinarily trace them only to Descartes, and Spinoza's pantheism is merely a spiritualized statement of Parmenides' doctrine that there is only one substance.

Modern scientists deliberately ignore the origin of things. Everything is in process moving from an unknown principle to an unpredictable end or rather to no end at all. Eddington writes, "It may be objected that we have no right to dismiss the starting-off as an inessential part of the problem But that is a problem of the pack, not of the isolated card."² The difficulty that is here so nonchalantly passed off is very likely caused by the fact that the majority of physicists refuse to admit anything but sense perception into their knowledge. Eddington in his introduction to The Nature of the Physical World illustrates this by his description of his scientific and familiar tables, where he attempts

²A. S. Eddington The Nature of the Physical World, p. 65

to destroy the idea of substance and replace it by thinghood which is in the order of sense-perceptible.

We may ask just exactly what is an event? Whitehead answers it is "the grasping into unity of a pattern of aspects."³ For Whitehead nature is composed of events. For Russell, on the other hand, everything is one big event.⁴ In spite of differences of this kind which crop out between various eventists they all agree that nature is a process. There are no such things as final and formal causes. Nature does not operate for an end; it merely operates. In Thomistic philosophy nature also operates but the writings of Aquinas are permeated with the statement, "Quod omne agens agit propter finem." Nature develops and unfolds in the thought of St. Thomas as fully as it does in the doctrine of any champion of progress, but according to the Thomistic interpretation everything has a beginning and an end, and God Himself operates in nature through the appetitus naturalis to transform a static hierarchy of being into a dynamic ascent to Himself.

Although teleology and causality are anathema among the greater number of modern philosophers there are some concessions made to them here and there. Max Planck, who introduced the quantum theory so idolized in the new physics, writes

³Science and the Modern World, p. 174.

⁴Russell, Philosophy, pp. 276-291

"it is essential for the healthy development of physics, that among the postulates of this science we reckon not merely the existence of law in general but also the strictly causal character of that law."⁵ Indeed, it is absurd to acknowledge a law without recognizing causality at the same time, and this is precisely what many scientists want to do. The very fact that they all admit natural and physical laws would indicate that their exclusion of causality is nominal, since they unconsciously have recourse to the principles of causality in their practical experiments. Moderns complain that the idea of causality is vague and hard to grasp. This is because they consider it only in the light of experience. St. Thomas did not have this difficulty, for causality was for him a metaphysical idea and, as such a manner of being he contemplated it.

Practically all current philosophy is stamped with an evolutionary character. If it is centered on anything it is homocentric. St. Thomas is definitely theo-centric in his world view, for God is both First Cause and Final End of all creatures. All things move toward Him and the appetitus naturalis is the reason for this movement in the universe.

It is the purpose of this thesis to study the place of the appetitus naturalis in Thomistic thought. It is, indeed, the principle in nature which is responsible for the order in

⁵Planck, The Universe in the Light of Modern Physics, p. 84, cit. Marling, opus cit., p. 141.

the universe. Before examining this principle in particular, however, it is necessary to understand that St. Thomas insisted on finality in the world. All things work toward ends, and they do so by means of their various appetites. From this standpoint, the working of things toward ends, appetites generally, and the appetitus naturalis, as such, will be discussed.

II. ALL THINGS WORK TOWARD ENDS

According to St. Thomas "omne agens agit propter bonum,"¹ and the good is that which all things seek. A creature, then, only desires an end in so far as it is good, or at least appears to be good, for intelligent beings move toward a good through the will which desires good, as such. Irrational beings, on the other hand, must seek an end in one of two ways: either by an intelligent agent directing it or by a principle put into its nature by the First Cause. An arrow flying toward a target is directed in its movement by the archer, but a stone falling to the earth is moved by its natural inclination, and this inclination is an intrinsic principle placed in the being by the Creator. However, the movement by which the arrow goes to the target is outside its nature and is somewhat violent. "The natural necessity inherent in those things which are determined to a particular thing is a kind of impression from God directing them to their end; as the necessity whereby an arrow is moved so as to fly towards a certain point is an impression from the archer, and not from the arrow. But there is a difference inasmuch as that which creatures receive from God is their nature, while that which natural things receive from man in addition to their nature is somewhat violent. Wherefore, as the violent necessity in the movement of the arrow shows the

action of the archer, so the natural necessity of things shows the government of Divine Providence!"²

Now objects tend toward definite ends, for if they did not they would not do one thing rather than another. "Everything that tends definitely to an end, either fixes its own end or has its end fixed for it by another: otherwise it would not tend rather to this end than to that. But the operations of nature tend to definite ends."³ Such indifference would cancel the efficacy of activity and nothing would be produced in nature at all. Therefore, action must be directed. One might suppose that action is directed by chance, but if this were so the gains of nature would not be the rule rather than the exceptions and the fact that they are is apparent from the order in the universe. Moreover, because we do not see deliberation taking place we must not conclude that there is no purpose. As Aristotle said, this is absurd. Art does not deliberate. If the shipbuilding art were in the wood, it would produce the same results by nature. If, therefore, it is present in art, it is present also in nature.⁴ It is clear, then, that there must be a definite purpose to an action even if the action is done for its own sake,⁵ for to every act there must be two termini - a beginning and an end, and the end is that for

²S. Theol. q.103, a.1, ad 3

³S.C.G. I, 44

⁴Phys. 11, 8, 199b

⁵S.C.G. III, 2

which the action is done.

What is it, then, that a thing seeks? Everything seeks its own perfection, and in doing so a being is tending to a good, for a thing is good inasmuch as it is perfect. Furthermore, as a thing tends to be good it moves toward the divine likeness - for God is Supreme Goodness, the Summum Bonum. Now a particular good is appetible because it resembles the First Goodness. Therefore, a thing in seeking its own good is seeking the divine likeness, and it tends to its own good for the sake of the divine likeness.⁶ Hence it follows that all things in reality seek the same Last End, namely, God. It is on this doctrine of finality that the Thomistic teleology rests.

St. Thomas re-formulated the ideas of Aristotle on nature working for ends. The philosopher tells us that in nature all things are conducive to ends, for an end is present in all things which come to be and are by nature.⁷ Although people often discuss whether such active creatures as spiders, ants, etc., work by intelligence or some other faculty, still we see even in plants that is produced which will be for the sake of an end - the leaves growing to provide shade for the fruit, the roots growing down into the ground seeking moisture, and so forth. There is, then, quite evidently a cause operating in nature, and since nature means matter and form of which the latter is the end of the former, and since all the

⁶ S.C.G. III, 24

⁷ Phys. idem, 199a

rest is for the sake of the end, the form must be the cause in the sense of that for the sake of which.⁸ Here Aristotle has the idea of a first cause being at the same time final end, and, of course, in Thomism this notion becomes fundamental.

⁸Phys. idem, 199a

III. APPETITE

St. Thomas conceives nature from two aspects: first as a static hierarchy of being¹ and secondly, as a dynamic ascent of this being to God². The force which converts the former into the latter is appetite, the tendency in an object toward something ordained³. All things have appetites according to their varying natures and all ultimately seek the Same Last End, God, since all desire the fulfillment of their perfection⁴. Although we say appetite moves things toward their ends, St. Thomas says it is not the cause of movement merely in the sense of change of place or of quality, for generation and destruction are movements too⁵. Thus, appetite is the cause of motion and rest in nature.

Appetite, then, is really desire, the craving of a thing to achieve the fulness of its being. Hence, appetite is a potency for something that is lacking in a being. It is satisfied only when the object of desire is reached and the appetitive subject is thus ontologically enriched. A being desires

¹S. Theol. q.47, a3 ad 2; DeVeritate q.29, a.3 ad 3

²S.C.G. I, 74

³DeVeritate, q.22, a.1 "....Quasi tendere in aliquid, ad ipsum ordinantur."

⁴S.C.G. III, 16

⁵In I De Anima, St. Thomas lect. 6; Sertillanges, St. Thomas d' Aquin, v.2, p.30

something that it lacks, since it would have no need of desiring what it already has. However, as Sertillanges points out, we must in some way possess it before we seek it, for the good sought must in some way be apprehended, as one must know a thing before he can desire it. "You would not search for me, if you had not already found me."⁶ From this it is clear that there is a relation between an appetite and the degree of knowledge in the being to which it belongs. Therefore, in the human soul there are as many appetitive powers as there are cognitive, that is two, for the soul apprehends objects by means of a sensitive and an intellectual faculty. But the power of apprehension is distinct from the appetitive potency for it has not the characteristic of movement. The act of apprehending is finished only when the object has passed into the power apprehending it but the appetite completes its function by merely tending towards an object?

There are three different kinds of appetite: natural, sensitive (animal), and rational. The natural appetite is that inclination everything has of its own nature for something suitable to itself. But the animal appetite results from the good apprehended.⁸ Rational appetite is strictly in the intellectual order and is, therefore, the highest desire of the

⁶ Sertillanges, opus cit., p. 191; St. Thomas, DeVeritate, q.22, a.1, ad 3 et ad 4

⁷ Gilson, opus cit. pp. 285-288

⁸ S. Theol. q. 78, a.1, ad 3

highest creatures in the material universe, men, truly the ambassadors between heaven and earth.

When St. Thomas adopted the Aristotelian explanation of nature with the theory of potency and act, he marked all activities with the imprimatur of teleology. Even mere matter craves to become something and it is actualized when it receives a form. Some inclination follows every form.⁹ Fire because of its form is inclined to rise and beget fire in the bodies with which it comes in contact. Just as there is a hierarchy of being in the philosophy of St. Thomas so there is a hierarchy of forms, and the forms are more perfect in beings with knowledge than in those devoid of it.¹⁰ For in beings without knowledge the form determines being only to its nature. Hence, the natural form is followed by a natural inclination which is called the natural appetite.¹¹ But in the case of beings with knowledge the form is receptive of the species of other things. Therefore, the senses can receive all things sensible and the intellect all things intelligible. Consequently, the soul of man through knowledge can become all things since it can receive the forms of all intelligible reality. Since, then, all things knowable can exist in the mind of man, in this respect man attains to the divine likeness, for all

⁹ S. Theol. q.80, a.1

¹⁰ S. Theol. q.80, a.1

¹¹ S. Theol. q.80, a.1

things pre-exist in the mind of God. Furthermore, as forms exist in things endowed with knowledge in a higher way than in things devoid of knowledge, and since the former are superior to the latter, there must be in the former an inclination surpassing the natural appetite. This superior inclination is a potency of the soul through which the animal desires what it apprehends as well as that to which it is naturally inclined.¹² Moreover, the higher the appetite the wider will be its range, for the nearer a nature is to God the less it will be determined by Him and the more it will determine itself. Therefore, things without knowledge are merely determined by their appetites to particular ends; they are directed only by their natural inclinations - nothing more. Thus the arrow is directed and set in motion by the archer; the stone falls naturally to the ground.¹³

Ascending from natural appetite the next step toward God is the sensitive appetite. Now sensuality includes two different potencies: the concupiscible and the irascible. The natural appetite does nothing more than obey the fundamental precept of the natural law: seek what is suitable and avoid what is harmful. The sensitive does more than this. It tends to resist what is contrary to the suitable and what is a threat with the harmful.¹⁴ The concupiscible potency is that which

¹²S. Theol. q.80, a.1

¹³De Veritate, q.22, a.1

¹⁴In III De Anima, St. Thomas, lect. 14

seeks what sense perception presents as suitable and avoids what the senses present as harmful.¹⁵ The irascible potency is that which strives against what opposes the suitable or threatens with the hurtful.¹⁶ These two potencies are frequently in opposition to each other and in this way act as a protection to each other, for anger lessens concupiscence, concupiscence anger.¹⁷

Now just as the natural and sensual appetites are both present in animals, so they together with the rational appetite are present in man. In the beast the sensitive appetite, being a potency of the soul, is subject to what is called the vis aestimativa, that faculty by which the sheep fears the wolf and the bird uses grass and twigs to build its nest. In the case of man, however, the sensual appetite, belonging to that part of the soul wherein reside the intellect and will, is subject to the particular reason which St. Thomas calls the cogitative.¹⁸ Although sensuality is subject to the particular reason, it is superior to the natural appetite since it is not merely determined to one object but to all that is suitable to it. But in man the reason must first apprehend the good in order to desire one object rather than another.¹⁹

The appetitive power of the soul is passive inasmuch

¹⁵In III De Anima, St. Thomas, lect. 14

¹⁶De Malo, q.8, a.3

¹⁷In III De Anima. locus cit.

¹⁸In II De Anima, St. Thomas, lect. 13

¹⁹S. Theol. q.81, a.5; De Veritate, q.25, a.2

as it is moved by a good apprehended?²⁰ The rational appetite is moved by the universal good as opposed to the particular good.²¹ Moreover, the rational appetite is active insofar as it is an act of the will impelling the intellect. The will, then, must desire what it apprehends as good by the very necessity of its nature, which is to desire the good.²² Therefore, the intellectual appetite is different from the sensitive appetite because the object of intellect is different from the object of sense. The reason that the will can transcend individual ends is that it is strictly immaterial²³ and is an inclination consequent on the form understood. Therefore, the will, being a tendency to universal good, can include all things.

It has been pointed out that both sensitive and rational appetites are composed of two parts: The first of the concupiscible and irascible potencies; the second of intellect and will. But the natural appetite, likewise, has two manifestations, namely, the active and the passive. The passive function tries to preserve the thing in nature by maintaining what it needs. The active operation tends to destroy whatever threatens the being. Furthermore, all corruptible beings must battle victoriously against hostile elements or be destroyed

²⁰In III De Anima St. Thomas, lect. 14

²¹St. Theol. I-II, q.1, a.2, ad 3

²²S. Theol. q.82, a.1

²³S. Theol. q.87, a.4

by them.²⁴ Therefore, the active operation of the natural appetite is higher than the passive. Here we see carried out again that orderly hierarchy so fundamental in the Thomistic synthesis. There is a gradation within the appetites corresponding to the degrees of perfection in the natural, sensitive, and rational inclinations themselves. This is the variety in uniformity which makes the very passing of things in the universe a thing of beauty.

To distinguish further the relation of every potency to its proper object, we may say that the proper object of the natural appetite is this thing as such; of the sensitive, this thing as suitable; and of the rational, good in general. Hence, the natural appetite seeks merely to preserve its nature; sensuality is concerned with a good thing; and rational appetite desires good, as such.²⁵ Nevertheless, the higher appetite moves only through the mediation of the lower and is thereby dependent upon the lower.²⁶ In this sense, the natural appetite is more universal than its superiors since it is common to all created things in so far as they exist at all, whereas, the sensitive appetite is found only in animals and man, the rational in man alone. Therefore, we may say that all appetite is dependent on the appetitus naturalis and consequently this natural inclination must be the primitive moving force in na-

²⁴Gilson, locus cit.; S. Theol. q.81, a.2

²⁵S. Theol. I-II, q.22

²⁶In III De Anima, St. Thomas, lect. 15, 16

ture. It is by means of the appetites generally that St. Thomas bridges the chasm between the finite and the Infinite.

IV. THE APPETITUS NATURALIS

In treating the appetitus naturalis, as such, it may be well to consider a Latin phrase which was used by many philosophers from the beginning of the thirteenth century and culminated with Spinoza in the Seventeenth, namely, "natura naturans - natura naturata."¹ It is thought that this expression was introduced into Western Europe by the Arabian philosophers, particularly through the translation of Averroes' Commentary on Aristotle. When the Arabic writings were being translated the interpreters merely wrote the literal Latin word above each Arabic word. In the translation into Latin then natura is used to substitute for *طبیعه* .

Although this expression appears fairly often in the works of the great Schoolmen of the thirteenth century it was not courted with great favor and St. Thomas himself uses natura naturata not at all and natura naturans only twice.² Moreover,

¹For the historical background of this term the writer is indebted to an article by Henry A. Lucks, "Natura Naturans - Natura Naturata," The New Scholasticism, v. IX, no. 1, 1935; also to The Order of Nature, Joseph Marling, C. PP. S., ch. I, 2.

²Sum.Theol. I-II, q.85, a.6 "Natura vero universalis est virtus activa in aliquo universali principio naturae, puta in aliquo caelestium corporum, vel alicujus superioris substantiae, secundum quod etiam Deus a quibusdam dicitur natura naturans; In Div. Nom. 4, 21 "Est autem Deus universalis causa omnium, quae naturaliter fiunt, unde et quidem ipsum nominant naturentem."

when the Scholastics use this expression at all they do so with a very orthodox connotation. Natura naturans clearly means God, the Efficient Cause in nature, and natura naturata denotes created nature. This is a very different interpretation indeed from the Pantheistic view of Spinoza when he employs the same terminology.

In spite of the fact that John of St. Thomas referred to natura naturans as a "vocabulo asperiore,"³ the Schoolmen really had precedents for this distinction if not for the phrase itself. Scotus Eringena had analyzed "natura quae creat et non creatur; natura quae creatur et creat; natura quae creatur et non creat; natura quae nec creatur nec creat."⁴ Furthermore, St. Augustine, the most revered authority in Christian philosophy before St. Thomas, spoke of natura creatrix⁵ by which he meant what the Scholastics designated by natura naturans, God.

The reason that this discussion is brought in here is that the purposes of this thesis is to show that the appetitus naturalis is the motivating force operating in natura naturata by the grace of natura naturans for the sake of establishing order in the universe. St. Thomas tells us that nature is seen to operate wisely and that operation to be wise must be ordered for it is proper to wisdom that all things be disposed in order.⁶

³Phil. Nat. I, P.O. IX, Art. I, pp. 148-9, Vives Ed., Paris, 1883

⁴De Divisione Naturae Lib. I, No. 1. Migne P. L. 122:411

⁵De Trinitate, XV, C.1, n.1 (Migne P.L. 42:1057)

⁶Opuscula II Mandonnet, (Edit. Rom. XXXIV), De Operationibus Occultis Naturae Ad Quemdam Militem Ultra Montanum.

When we speak of natural appetite we refer to an inclination inherent in a thing without being caused by anything outside, for that is natural to a thing which has been put into it by God⁷; and when a thing is moved naturally it is moved "ab interiori principio."⁸

The appetitus naturalis is fundamental in nature for it is the means by which things devoid of knowledge seek their ends. The references in St. Thomas to this inherent natural force are frequent and he describes it in various ways. It is a natural necessity, a kind of impression from God in those beings determined to a particular end, directing them to their end as the necessity, whereby an arrow is moved so as to fly towards a certain point, is an impression from the archer and not from the arrow⁹. Again St. Thomas says "the natural appetite is that inclination everything has, of its own nature, for something suitable to itself."¹⁰

Now even things devoid of knowledge can work for an end and desire good through the natural appetite.¹¹ But in working toward their end they seek both their own perfection and the divine likeness. Now whether a thing is seeking its own perfection or the divine likeness it is desiring a good - its own particular good or the Summum Bonum. Since, therefore,

⁷S. C. G., III, 100

⁸St. Thos. In Phys. Arist. Lib. VIII, IV, 6

⁹S. Theol., q.103, a.1, ad 3

¹⁰Ibid. 1, q.78, a.1

¹¹S.C.G. III, 24; De Veritate q.22, q.1; S. Theol. I-II, q.1, a.2

all things are good only in so far as they participate in the Supreme Goodness, it follows that all things are ordered to that Goodness, and St. Thomas says, "omnia ordinantur in unum finem, qui est Deus."¹² Everything that exists at all has some perfection in its very being and the tendency inherent in its nature is to become as actualized as it can. However, being is either an end in and for itself or it is finalized in some complete being, and since God is the source of all being He must necessarily be the end toward which it tends.¹³ God, then, is the first cause in the order of final causes just as He is highest in the order of goods.¹⁴ Furthermore, all creatures want to become godlike, "omnia intendunt assimilari Deo."¹⁵ It is because of this desire implicit in all nature that in the hierarchy of being all higher beings are dependent upon the lower, yet each species having something more than its inferiors, by that very superiority, raises the lower above its inferior level and brings it nearer to God. This is the most profound law of the finite - to possess the Infinite. Hence, the ultimate end of all things being to become godlike, beings seek this end according to their own natures.¹⁶ It is this common desire of all creatures for God which makes the uniformity

¹²S.C.G. III, 17

¹³O'Mahony, opus cit., p.90; also Post.Anal. Lib I, lect. 13; Metaph. Lib V, lect. 3.

¹⁴S.C.G. III, 17

¹⁵S.C.G. III, 19

¹⁶S.C.G. III, 20

in nature; their seeking Him in the manner consonant with their individual natures gives variation to the tapestry of the universe. This is the progress which the evolutionists see in the world and are unable to explain. Because they fail to perceive or deliberately ignore the fact that every action must have two termini - a principle and an end - they try to solve the apparent difficulty of change and becoming by a theory of inevitable progress never to be terminated. St. Thomas was more astute than this. He saw God as the Alpha and the Omega of all things and man as the epitome of creation, through whose mediation all lower beings, impelled by the appetitus naturalis, attain their final end.

Granted that all beings seek their ends through the natural appetite the question arises how is it that these particular ends sought by individual objects do not conflict? The stone falling into its proper place in the universe; the fire rising to communicate its form; the seed growing into the sturdy plant; the egg developing into the chicken; none of these interferes with the others. The Saint explains that the part loves the whole more than itself and therefore works harmoniously with other parts for the sake of the whole.¹⁷ Moreover, that this is so is evident from experience since we perceive in "the external finality of nature the adaptation of species to one another."¹⁸

¹⁷Summa Theol. I-II, q.109, a.3

¹⁸Marling, opus cit., p.62

We say that natural things develop in obedience to certain principles which scientists call natural laws. This is the inner order in objects to which St. Augustine refers when he says, "Ardo est inquit, per quem aguntur omnia quae Deus constituit."¹⁹ Inasmuch as all beings act according to their natures and seek the divine likeness, all creation is the expression of God's nature as it can be imitated beyond Himself. Therefore, all creatures, animate and inanimate, act according to certain rules in the view of given ends. These rules we call the natural law, and the natural law is one manifestation of the eternal law by which God willed the universe.²⁰ Hence, the natural law, as such, is the orderly process nature follows in carrying on its activities and since the appetitus naturalis is the motivating force in natural objects it is the mode according to which irrational creatures participate in the eternal law. Now St. Thomas insists that law is essentially reasonable.²¹ His famous definition of law has become proverbial among Scholastics: it is a certain reasonable order for the common good, promulgated by one who has the authority to care for the community.²² Therefore, St. Thomas would insist, law can be applied to the irrational universe only analogously.²³

¹⁹ De Ordine, I, 10, 28, P.L. 32:991

²⁰ Gilson, opus cit., p. 327

²¹ S. Theol. I-II, q.90, a.4; I-II, q.97, a.3

²² S. Theol. I-II, q.90 *ibid.*

²³ Marling, opus cit., p. 83

In commenting on the Pseudo - Dionysius the Angelic Doctor, however, appears to identify the appetitus naturalis with the naturales leges for he says, the very natural inclinations themselves which impel things to their proper ends and are consonant with the effect of the natural appetite we call the natural laws.²⁴ Furthermore, the Saint uses lex naturae in the sense of ordo naturae since the order of nature follows directly from the promulgated natural laws. Also these natural laws are sanctioned, for if by design or accident certain irrational bodies are prevented from reaching their end this failure results in their destruction. Prof. Gilson says that in the event that certain bodies are prevented from meeting the requirements of their nature they suffer in their substance as well as their operations and they are destroyed. Nor, he continues, is this either a consequence of the disorder which prevents them from following their inherent tendencies or an accidental complement of this disorder. It is, on the other hand, a part of the situation in which the body is placed as a result of this disorder, and death or destruction of the animal of object so situated is the very thing that re-establishes order in the disorder. Moreover, since nothing can escape the law and everything which attempts to perishes inasmuch as it succeeds, the persistent being of the body that obeys the law and the destruction of the body that defies it is the moral sanction of

²⁴In De Div. Nom., X, 1

the natural law.²⁵

It has been noted that St. Thomas identifies the natural appetite with the natural law and both with the order of nature. Consequently, the appetitus naturalis must be the intrinsic cause of the harmony and regularity in nature. Since, then, it is God who has endowed creatures with their natural inclinations, He must be the extrinsic Efficient Cause in the universe. Here is the orthodox Scholastic conception of Natura Naturans - natura naturata.

But what about the case of miracles? In this case would the natural appetite be destroyed if it were thus impeded from its natural effect? St. Thomas says it is very difficult to oppose the laws of nature.²⁶ But in the Summa Contra Gentiles IV, 55, he says it is proper to God to change the laws of nature. What happens in a miracle? God merely suspends the natural laws. True, this suspension would prevent the natural appetite from having its effect but it would in no way destroy or impair that appetite itself, for its destruction would be that of its very nature. Moreover, miracles illustrate a higher law than that of the relative, namely, the metaphysical dependence of the finite on the Infinite Who transcends the relations of contingency found on the plane of the relative.²⁷

²⁵Gilson, opus cit., p. 331

²⁶In II Sent., d.9, q.1, a.3

²⁷O'Mahony, opus cit., p. 87

From the lowest creature in which matter desires form to the highest which sees God Himself, an overwhelming urge permeates nature and makes it go of itself to God. The appetitus naturalis, therefore, is the divine dynamo in the ascent of being. Now God is the first desire of all beings because they love Him.²⁸ It is an Augustinian idea that it is love which makes the stone, for example, fall into its proper place in the universe, for love is a tendency towards an object desired. Nevertheless, this is also a Thomistic notion, for Aquinas says God is the first desire of all things.²⁹

God created the universe freely and essences are the gratuitous gifts of the Divine Goodness. In this sense nature is an overflow of the Divine Love.³⁰ Moreover, God did not merely create beings and then abandon them. He preserves them and cares for them by His Divine Providence which is shown by the natural necessity of things.³¹ Furthermore, St. Thomas says, "it belongs to the Divine Goodness, as it brought things into existence, so to lead them to their end: and this is to govern."³² Although God created the world through His Love, wishing thereby to communicate His Own goodness, He did not give up

²⁸S. Theol. I-II, q.109, a.3

²⁹S.C.G. I, 37

³⁰This is only apparently similar to the neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation, for creation was an act of God's free will and what He created is essentially distinct from Himself.

³¹S. Theol., q.103, a.1, ad 3

³²S. Theol., q.103, a.1

anything of Himself in the sense of losing anything when He endowed beings with their individual natures. Creatures did, on the other hand, acquire their essence and existence from Him. Therefore, what God put into beings essentially was a love of Himself which would move them to seek Him Who loved them first. This progress toward unity so manifest in the universe is caused by the love of God inscribed in creatures, and the Angelic Doctor tells us, "In appetitu autem naturali principium huiusmodi motus est connaturalitas appetentis ad id quod tendet quae dici potest amor naturalis."³³ Therefore, the appetitus naturalis must be this love of nature for God. Now irrational creatures are driven by their own bias rather than act for themselves³⁴ but the natural love in all things is caused by an outside intelligence not existing in natural things but in Him Who creates them.³⁵ Since intelligence rules the destinies of lower orders it is really through the intellect of created being that the irrational approaches the Divine Intelligence. Hence, it is in the mind of man that the natural tendency towards God sees the light of consciousness, and it is the human intellect that gives meaning and imparts perfection to nature, bringing it from the potency of intelligibility to the actuality of being known.³⁶

³³S. Theol., I-II, q.26, a.1

³⁴S.C.G. IV, 55

³⁵S. Theol. I-II, q.27, a.2, ad 3

³⁶O'Mahony, opus cit., pp.102,103

Since, as has been shown, God draws creatures toward Himself as the Object of their desire, and since the natural appetite is the very love of God, we can say with Dante that all beings seek their ends "by that Love impelled that moves the sun in heaven and all the stars."

V. CONCLUSION

Contrary to modern theories of reality St. Thomas explains the universe by his doctrine of finality. God is the First Cause and Final End of all things. Beings with and without knowledge work toward definite ends, striving always to fulfill their own perfection and thus attain the divine likeness.

St. Thomas sees being as a hierarchy from matter up to God, with all creatures desiring Him through their proper appetite. The appetitus naturalis alone is universal. It is inherent in all created being. It is the very love which impels every nature to seek its end, and as such a love, it is the intrinsic cause of the harmony and regularity in the universe. Hence, the Thomistic concept of the operations in nature is markedly purposive, postulating God as the Beginning and the End of everything.

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The thesis "The Appetitus Naturalis in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas," written by Doris Marie Barnett, has been accepted by the Graduate School of Loyola University, with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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